

Former Defense Secretary: International Alliances are Beneficial ‘Force Multipliers’



In this month's InSTEP, a Chamber International Affairs Division event series, we hosted former U.S. Secretary of Defense Ash Carter for an interview with *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius. The discussion touched on topics including the intersection between national security and American competitiveness in advanced technologies, the U.S. force presence in Afghanistan, managing adversarial relationships with a rising China and a declining Russia, and cybersecurity challenges.

Top takeaways:

- **The best defense is a good offense:** The United States remains ahead of China militarily, reflecting our longstanding investments in military technology. We should continue to invest in areas like AI and semiconductors. But just as important: maintaining our friendships and alliances with like-minded countries around the world as a “force multiplier” of American power.
- **A tech-splintered future?** The U.S. and China aren't heading towards a new Cold War, but a split on technology – particularly in areas with national security implications like 5G cellular networks – may be inevitable. Either because “the U.S. does it to protect ourselves, or because China insists on it.”
- **U.S.-India ties & the Quad:** The world's largest and oldest democracies share values and a culture of innovation – just look at the number of Indian tech entrepreneurs making waves in Silicon Valley and across the United States. While the relationship has its challenges, Carter called stronger commercial and

strategic ties “destined to occur.” India also plays a key role in the ‘Quad,’ a strategic grouping with the United States, Japan and Australia.

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